

Letter to Agnes Livingstone 1, 29 November 1861

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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H.M.S. Pioneer 29th Nov^r 1861

My Dear Mother

I am not sure whether
you will be pleased or not to hear
a mission has been established in this
land of darkness and of the shadow
of death, because Scotch bodies are
so desperately bigotted- Janet says
"what good can Puseyites do" and
the mission is certainly of that
school, but without saying that
they are perfect or asking can any
good come out of Nazareth - I say
anything is better than heathenism
We are in the centre of the slave market
and it is against this gigantic
evil that my own mission is
directed. We went up lately to Lake
Nyassa and found it a large

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body of water with a population such
as I never saw before for numbers
and the only trade was that in slaves -
people were offered for sale but
nothing else. Fancy this state of things
over 200 miles - and an Arab ship
built on the Lake to carry slaves over
it. When we came up to the North end
of it the shores were literally strewn
with skeletons and in some parts
putrid bodies of the slain - this was
done by a tribe of Zulus and will
give an idea of how matters stand
where Satan has his seat. I am
exceedingly glad to hear that the Free
Kirk contemplates a mission
in this dark region, and hope that

they will not be discouraged by the
difficulties that beset the undertaking
the London mission tried the
Makololo and when we reached that
country we found that most of the

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missionaries had perished. Had they
written to me I might have helped
them for we can with God's blessing
cure the fever in a very short time
Charles for instance had an attack
in the very valley where they helplessly
perished - took the medicine and
next day marched on, but they
did not write and when I arrived
at Linyanti it was but to behold
their graves. All our efforts here
are directed to the eradication of
the slave trade - that is the great
evil here. When we took the bishop
up to shew him where to live in
health we met Tette people returning
with large bands of captives, these
were freed and about 140 souls
delivered to the mission to begin
school with. they were chiefly women
and children - their relatives all killed
Anything is better than heathenism

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I am astonished that none but three
letters have come to you. I have written
to you by every opportunity except one
I got one from Janet and one from
Agnes at the end of three years - they
had written none previously because
"they did expect any sympathy
from me" I recieved one from
Janet a few days ago = I am going
down to sea for provisions &
a steamer which we expect, to
put on the Lake. I expect also to
meet my wife after our long
weary and unexpected separation
I would have sent for her long
ago but dreaded exposing her &

the child to the fever in our
wretched accomodation.
With kindest saluations to you
all I am ever Affectionately
David Livingstone